



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(860) 757-2270 Fax (860) 757-2215

Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
April 1, 2013

House Bill 6677, An Act Concerning The Imposition Of A Community Service Requirement Upon a Minor Who Purchases Tobacco Products

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch in opposition to **House Bill 6677, An Act Concerning the Imposition of a Community Service Requirement Upon a Minor Who Purchases Tobacco Products**. The bill would allow the Commissioner of the Department of Revenue Services (DRS) or the Superior Court to impose a period of community service in lieu of a fine for minors who have been found to purchase tobacco products.

Over the past several years, a concerted effort has been made to divert children who have committed less serious offenses from the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters. This bill, perhaps unintentionally, would have the opposite effect. Additionally, if enacted, it would require the court – not merely a juvenile probation officer – to order the community service, thus making commission of this offense more serious than other criminal acts, since matters handled non-judicially (i.e. by a juvenile probation officer) are immediately erased. Other Judicial Branch concerns include:

- What happens if the child doesn't pay the fine or complete community service? Is confinement in a juvenile detention facility contemplated?
- Who is the supervisor of the "community service plan"?
- What occurs if the parent does not consent to the "community service plan"?

Since the bill is counter-productive to the effort of keeping youth out of court for non-serious matters, we would respectfully request that no action be taken on it.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.